

## STUDY OF BEST PRACTICES ADOPTED BY SELECTED EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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### ABSTRACT

Since Covid-19 was declared a pandemic, it has created serious health crisis around the world. Apart from being a health crisis, it has impacted different sectors economically. A noticeable change has been seen in the educational sector as well. As most of the educational organizations closed worldwide many educational universities and institutions forced themselves to teach and work online in this pandemic so far. The current situation can also be termed as an experimental phase where educational sector is trying technology to reach students and to work online. The paper cites various examples from global market. The examples used in the research also shows how online and virtual teaching has been introduced due to the covid-19 pandemic. The research also includes some examples of universities where virtual learning was already being used. Additionally, the research paper also talks about the various technological platforms which are being used worldwide to support online teaching. The objective of this research is to discuss few best practices of educational institutions in this online teaching phase to suggest few recommendations for effectiveness of online teaching. We will also discuss about few platforms and technologies which are being used to support online education. The research findings can be used by researchers and policy makers in future working in the educational sector.

**Keywords:** *Online teaching, Education, Covid-19, Educational disruption, Virtual Learning*

## **INTRODUCTION**

The word “Paradigm” means framework. So, developing a framework for education is a broad concept which might include all types of practices, theories and models which will aim at supporting the educational level. If we study from an educational perspective, at a domain level we might have three major paradigm shifts. These are Scientific domain, the humanistic domain, and the artistic domain (Patrick Blessinger, 2018). A paradigm shift can occur quickly which can be the case during the pandemic. As many educational institutes are trying virtual teaching and other technologies to connect with their students. The other proposed way of paradigm shift is that it can be slow but looking at the current scenario it seems that educational sector is adapting to new methods for its sustainability.

Education is seen as a basic right for all, and it is also termed as a basic driver for progress in all 19 SDG's (Sustainable Developmental Goals). As many as 100 countries have yet not given any date to open their schools. The current crisis is disrupting the normal educational system in a way (Policy Brief: Education during covid-19 and beyond, 2020). In this fast-moving time of COVID-19 things are changing quickly. Every sector is getting ready and transforming themselves to counter the effects of the pandemic. According to UNESCO, half the world's students are affected by COVID-19 as schools are closed partially or fully (UNESCO.ORG, 2021). UNESCO mentioned in March 2021, that it is critical to work on educational recovery to avoid any educational catastrophe that might happen due to the current situation of COVID-19. As per UNESCO, 186 countries closed different types of educational facilities which affected 90% of the global learners (Ali, 2021). Teachers and students worldwide have been affected due to this situation. The challenge is to survive in this unprecedented time and also plan for future educational policies. This will help in sustainability. Many times, it has been suggested that educational sector needs a change, and this time of pandemic is a time where we can experiment and synergize to find new ways of teaching and learning. The question which is being discussed in educational sector is that are we really in a phase of paradigm shift in the educational sector? The international association of universities is monitoring challenges and the response to these challenges in higher education and the world (Aneela Maqsood, 2021).

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Sudden unexpected closure of educational institutes worldwide has brought sudden disruption in the education world. Some studies have hinted that the current pandemic covid-19 is creating learning losses and even income inequality. If we take case of Europe, almost 45 countries in Europe closed their school when they realized the pandemic is increasing (Robin Donnelly, 2021). Undoubting things are different as they were used to be like in South Korea students are still studying online however in countries like Denmark, children up to age 11 years are planning to return to nurseries at least (Cathy Li, n.d.).

The challenge in preparing the educational sector to fight against the current COVID-19 pandemic needs preparing students and teachers. The educational institute must ensure the wellbeing of its students and on the other hand, it must train its teachers, so, that they can used the technology to further support the educational system(Luis Espino-Díaz \*, 2020).

As we have seen that the educational sector needs transformation. This is the time, when technology is needed the most, not only to connect teachers and students but to sustain themselves in this pandemic and to prepare themselves in any future pandemic. We have so many examples worldwide where online platforms are giving their services for free. We have an Indian online learning platform called BYJU'S which was founded in 2021 and it has become the world's most valued EdTech company. It has given free educational classes on its application Think and Learn it got approximately 200% new students(Cathy Li, n.d.).

Technology and education are not something which is new. Even before Covid-19 technology was an integral part of teaching in learning however it became more evident during the covid-19 pandemic time. If we look at the numbers, in 2019 the global EdTech investments were approximately US\$18.66 billion and it is expected that by 2025, the investments can go to US\$350 billion (Cathy Li, n.d.).

The ongoing health crisis has forced us to witness a unique educational scenario. This scenario includes various educational organizations including schools, colleges, and universities, who went online because of the lockdowns and variety of safety measures being taken. This also made the educational sector realize that digital literacy is important specially if we need a paradigm shift in the educational sector(Fadi Al-Turjman, 2021).

Much research has suggested that to bring this paradigm shift, collective efforts are needed. These collective efforts can be aid from government, fully developed management system,

innovative e-learning platforms, and teacher training programs. (Fadi Al-Turjman, 2021). If we talk about e-learning platform, they are available easily. Educational sector is using Mindspark, youtube, google, Quizlet, Khan Academy, Polyup to support e-learning. When we talk about digital technology, educational community worldwide have access to variety of programs and software's. The widely used can be Moodle, Paper Airplanes, ClassDojo, Edraak, EkStep, Google classroom etc. As teachers are working from home, so, they also have readily available courses which they can take to enhance their knowledge and skills. These courses can be discovered at online platforms like Coursera, Alison, Edx, Swayem, Icourses, Future Learn, European School of Academy, Canvas Network etc. When we talk about virtual classrooms, they need collaborative LMS softwares and programs. In this time, they have become important like never. To name some popular used programs in this category, we can say, Skype, MS Teams, Zoom, WebEX, Lark, Dingtalk, InstaVC, Google meet etc. Apart from all these facilities available for virtual teaching, we do have many free and ready to use platforms to further support virtual teaching. The most common platforms are Commonwealth of Learning, Education Nation, Edsurge UNCHR, Brookings etc. (Fadi Al-Turjman, 2021).

If we look at the current situation, the pandemic has already created challenges to traditional teaching. As in the traditional style the interaction between the teacher and the student is done in different ways however the current online teaching has its own limitations and the interaction between teacher and the student is not like before. If we look at the teachers, they might have their own limitations while teaching and students on other side, might have their own limitations related to online learning.

So, teaching and learning cycle Is expected to change during this COVID-19 time. Another important aspect of teaching online are the restrictions for school administration as well. For a successful educational administration, its important to communicate well between channels like administration, teachers, and students. As most of the educational institutions have gone online this communication gap has been widened. (Cheng X. )

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The research methodology is qualitative. The data analyzed is mostly from secondary sources including books, reports, journals, and other reliable online sources. However, the researcher also interviewed people from academia and that helped in reaching the final part of research including recommendations and conclusion.

## **CASE STUDIES AND SOME BEST PRACTICES**

Online teaching have been a part of education sector, however, now they have become more active and acceptable in today's time of the pandemic. Traditional classroom teaching has its own benefits however, as classroom teaching is not an option for many countries, the shift is for online and e-educational platforms. As the continuation of education should not stop due to the pandemic as this can be another catastrophe.

UNESCO launched a Global Education Coalition. This platform aims to support members from 175 members from the UN group members from sectors like education, civil society, and many other parts of private sector with aim to collaborate and to protect the right of education during this unique time which is changing due to ongoing COVID-19 situation (UNSECO.ORG, 2021)

The teaching and learning transition from traditional classroom teaching to online is something which we have witnessed in the past. Online teaching is not new to the educational world. We have prominent universities like Ohio state university, University of Illinois and University of Florida which has tried to offer a part of their curriculum through online teaching in 2008, 2007 and 2001 (Broz, 2020). The aim has been to reach student who wants to join these institutes or take the courses these universities are offering. Also, many students due to some limitation. We also have online platform like Coursera which offers variety of courses for online users to take advantage from.

Ukraine has set good examples by organizing camps and events to support online education during pandemic. Recently, Ukraine launched a project co-organized by Ukraine Ministry of Higher Education and Ministry of Digital Transformation which brings teacher and students together and stay connected in the current times of the pandemic. The platform includes 18 subjects, and the course material is supported by videos, texts, and another related medium (Robin Donnelly, 2021).

Another important platform to be used is EduView. It is a dashboard which provides data related to education and COVID-19. The EduView dashboard provides different types of educational data like early childhood development, learning, equity, monitoring of SDG related to education, school closure data and, students affected by COVID-19 etc. (UNICEF, 2020).

**The international commission on the future of education (established by UNESCO IN 2019) presented nine ideas that will support educational sector in coming years.**

These ideas suggested by the commission were,

1. Strengthen education as a common good which means education is like health, which means, we flourish when everyone flourishes.
2. Broaden the right to education for all.
3. Adding more value to “teaching” as a profession and, teaching collaboration.
4. Facilitating students and children participation. We can plan how students, children and youth can be part of the change which are related to bring change in the educational sector.
5. More learning spaces should be provided by educational institutions (or schools). A learner should be able to learn in classroom and, in other learning environments.
6. More technologies available to teachers and students. The conditions to use them should be easy and off course, they should be cheap or mostly free.
7. Adding scientific literacy in the normal curriculum.
8. Funding of educational sector and projects should be promoted by governments and even international bodies. As educational development is a mutual goal for all.
9. A global solidarity is needed to end any kind of inequality ongoing in the educational world (Education in a post-COVID world: Nine ideas for public action)

Teachers can also check online resources and can research for new ways which can support teaching and learning. It is a good way to take advantage of virtual field trips (VFTs) and other learning tools and resources.(Morgan, 2020). ISTE created seven standards to support students in a high technology driven environment. It is advisable that teachers can refer to these ISTE standards for guidance during this online teaching time.

**The seven standards for students are:**(Morgan, 2020)

- Empower the learner.
- Digital citizen
- Knowledge constructor
- Innovative designer
- Computational thinker
- Creative communicator
- Global collaborator

The ISTE standards for educators and teachers were also designed. The aim of these standards was designed to support the learners in a way that they feel empowered. **The seven standards for educators are:**

- Learner
- Leader
- Citizen
- Collaborator
- Designer
- Facilitator
- Analyst

## **SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION**

This is true that the pandemic is devastating in terms of health and even economic consequences. However, the educational sector to sustain must plan so it faces limited consequences. Some suggestions given were creating a recovery programs suitable for each region. This also depends on the impact the have suffered due to the pandemic. Government or non-governmental bodies can create a special budget which will help fight this situation in future (Robin Donnelly, 2021).

We must take urgent steps to control the current learning crisis. The current focus is on safe reopening of school and control the transmission of the virus. The educational sector should aim to create a resilient education system for a sustainable education growth. The government can generally support topics like equity and inclusion and reinforce steps for risk management. The focal point is to reimaging the complete education system and speed up the learning and growth period (Policy Brief: Edcation during covid-19 and beyond, 2020). If we

look at the current situation, schools and universities worldwide are fighting to teach in these unprecedented times. So, this shows that the education sector is now opened to change currently; this pandemic time should be taken as an opportunity to find new ways and methods to improve, enhance and accelerate the educational sector. The impact of the current COVID-19 situation is quite unclear. As

Our future initiative in the educational sector is going to depend on the current situation as well. We must study the current trends, visions, and issues in the educational policies across the globe and this will help in laying the foundation for future growth(Cheng, 2020). A focus should be given to prepare a framework or platforms, where we take the learning's learnt from pandemic Covid-19 so far and use it to create a sustainable and technological advanced educational environment which will enable us to fight future crisis as well. The research and studies can be useful for many countries as everyone is affected by pandemic. The lesson learnt so far will force innovations, new methods, and techniques of teaching.

#### **SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

As we are still in the pandemic, so, this topic is open to research.

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